

Pelham Education Visioning Committee

DRAFT

Meeting Minutes: December 8, 2010

Attendance: Kathy Weilerstein (School Committee), Ed Martin (Select Board), Fred Vanderbeck (Finance Committee), Warren Hall (Planning Board), Michael Hussin, Darius Modestow, Claire Kurtz, Lisa Desjarlais (Pelham Principal), Paul Lipman (Pelham Gr. 1 teacher)

Agenda Review:

1. Report back on research
2. Revisit scenario discussions
3. Updates and announcements

1. Report Back on Research

Darius:

- Worthington – still unclear what exactly is going on with their situation, level of independence and who holds various responsibilities – appear to be having trouble getting out of their regional agreement.
- Vernon, VT. Sends their students to Brattleboro – not clear what the financial relationship is and to Pioneer where they pay \$10K per student plus the town pays for transportation

Michael:

- Spoke with Paul Dunphy; confirmed that the decision to close a school (when there is only one school) is made by the TOWN. In order to make that decision, the town MUST have an alternate plan on how they will education their children. **See handout from Michael**
- There will be a Charter School Public Forum on Monday, Dec. 13 at 7PM at the Bangs Center in Amherst. Paul Dunphy will be speaking.

Kristen: Kathy read email report sent by Kristen – **see email document from Kristen**

Tom: Kathy read email report sent by Tom – **see email document from Tom**

Lisa: Now has a name from someone in DESE who can help her answer some of our questions. She will contact them in the near future.

2. Scenario Discussion

COMMENTS

- We still need financial information from the 5-year plan the finance committee is preparing
- Two main strands of research are:
 - What is economically doable?
 - What is educationally best?

- Big question seems to be to clarify the difference and pros/cons of a Regional vs Union plan first – then to explore which town/s to explore an affiliation with
- We need to determine the best ways to share the information/ideas we have gathered (once we have the information clarified and can explain it), and get feedback from the people in town about how they feel about various issues and questions
 - Independent vs Region vs Union
 - The difference in educational models currently existing in towns that we would consider regionalizing with (Amherst, Shutesbury, Leverett)

QUESTIONS

- What would it cost to contract central office services if we were an independent district
- What are the different ways to write a regional agreement? Factors will include – but are not limited to:
 - How many members will there be?
 - How will each town be represented?
 - What will be the guidelines for closing a school?
- What about Magnet schools? Can they be at an elementary level? What are the rules, requirements etc?
- Should we pursue adding a Preschool to Pelham?
 - Financial implications (costs and revenues)
 - As a “feeder” for the elementary school – keeping families in town
 - Do we have enough children for a pre-school?
 - Note – Leverett and Shutesbury have a pre-school

NEXT STEPS: We all agreed that we will focus on gaining a full understanding of the difference between entering a REGIONAL vs UNION agreement. We will all review our notes from previous meetings as well as other questions we have and come to the next meeting with those questions articulated and with answers whenever possible.

3.Updates and Announcements

- Please follow the Superintendent search process in January
- Charter School meeting on 12/13
- Let’s have a tour of Pelham Elementary school for the committee members who are not familiar with its current space.

NEXT MEETING: Wed. January 12th at 6:30 PM in the faculty room of Pelham Elementary

AGENDA:

1. Review minutes
2. Updates and announcements
3. Review and discussion of questions and answers generated
4. Update from Finance Committee

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